

WOODS 'N WATER™

**Whitetail
To-Do List**

**Redfish
Changes
Approved**

AUGUST 2022

45TH YEAR 1ST ISSUE

\$3.99

**Feds Eye
Bottom
Fishing
Closure**

Fishing Reports

Pig Stickin'

**Real Estate
Listings**



Gunpowder & Grit

August 2022

By Jon Kohler, JD Broker / Partner – from “The Kohler Chronicles”

At Jon Kohler & Associates, we have 30 years of experience working beside some of the Southeast’s most steadfast land stewards. Men and women who own land not necessarily for financial gain, but for spiritual reward. These landowners have a goal beyond present-day enjoyment and more toward historical reverence and conservation for the future. Keeping land natural and healthy is a lot of work! Unsurprisingly, it takes a team to do all this. In steps the Land Manager – the individual with the energy and know-how to implement the landowner’s goals and turn these worthy pursuits into reality.

From day one of Jon Kohler & Associates, we’ve revered the land manager. To us, he likens with advisors from the Old Testament such as Daniel or Joseph in their role to the Pharaoh. The land manager may not be the king but on these properties he’s the closest thing to it. His power lies in the fact that the landowner knows he will not prosper without his solid work ethic or heeding their good advice. It takes a rare skill set of knowledge, ambition and resources to manage the constraints they are under. Put it all together – and they do it all even in the high heat of July through September.

“I have to admit, I have a bit of envy for how land managers spend their day – until the dog days of summer.” - Jon Kohler

While historically a physically laborious profession, today’s land managers must bring a certain savvy to the job. They must understand today’s science of land management. There are national and local resources, such as Quail Forever and Tall Timbers, that share knowledge and support to help with just that. However, with upheaval and supply chain issues the norm these days, land managers are running major operations, with high monetary value, on limited resources given that prices on necessities such as fertilizer and fuel continue to rise. Shortages of things as simple as feed are commonplace.

“Wild quail and good aesthetics are number one, products of fire and number two, products of diesel.” - Jon Kohler

Even with these challenges, if there is anyone on this Earth more passionate about a tract of land than the landowner



himself, it is the land manager. Most likely, this individual has had his hand in land management since, well, someone they respected in their youth first introduced them to it. For most, it started with a childhood reverence. Seldom does one just decide, to go into this complex field without being grounded in the land.

“I believe God called me to land stewardship,” - Walter Hatchett, Jon Kohler &

Associates. “Even as an unsteady toddler, I always wondered off to the woods – much to my mother’s horror. I just couldn’t keep my eyes off it. I had a desire to know everything growing and living out in that wood. A feeling that still sticks with me today.”

It takes that sort of passion along with a healthy dose of grit and a huge portion of work ethic to manage a tract of land along with the owner’s goals and their guests’ expectations – all with Mother Nature’s input. The land, the weather, and the wild game are not completely in our control. We can plant a tract of pine today, only to have a pop-up windstorm knock half of it down tomorrow. Maybe it’s that challenge – a bit of taming the wild – that gets the property manager out of bed before sunrise each day.

“The greatest reward from all those years managing property is going back, 30 plus years later, and seeing the results: Superior deer because of the management program I put in place years and years before. Or, a stand of trees I planted as seedlings that are now imposing sentinels of the property.” - Walter Hatchett

There is something Biblical about caring for the land, and something equally redeeming about taking land that has been damaged and restoring it. It is in Genesis, the first book of the Bible, where God outlines man’s dominion over Earth:

“God said, Let Us make man in Our image...and let them have dominion...over all of Earth...” Genesis 1:26

The work done by land managers is directed by God. God created Earth. He gave man dominion over it. The land managers today are following his directive while also creating beauty and sustenance that will last well into the future.

So, here’s to the land managers – those unsung heroes of land stewardship that are daily working the land, with a little bit of grit, and help and direction from God above.

